

Newstead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124017
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	340475
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Whitehead
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Stocking
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed and inspectors observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's own assessments, policies and governors minutes, samples of pupils' work, monitoring evidence and documentation related to safeguarding. The responses to 130 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were scrutinised as well as a sample of pupils' questionnaires.

- whether standards in English and mathematics are improving quickly enough
- whether the quality of teaching is consistently strong enough to promote good progress by pupils
- how well the new leadership team contributes to driving school improvement.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils in this average-sized school are from White British backgrounds. A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is almost double the national average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and holds the Investors in People award. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The headteacher has steered the school successfully through many important changes within the last year. With support from staff and the local authority, she has set it on a firm path to improvement. There is clear direction for all staff, and an improving trend which is satisfactorily embedded in new management practices. Leaders' accurate evaluation of its work gives satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a satisfactory start, following decisive action to improve provision for them, and they now make steady progress in all areas of learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, and reach standards in English and mathematics which are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards and progress are picking up, due to significant improvements in teaching quality and much better use of assessment to plan pupils' targets. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Consequently, most make satisfactory, and some make good, progress. The school recognises that standards in English and mathematics at both key stages are not as high as they should be, especially for the more able pupils. The school correctly identifies that teachers do not use assessment data well to pinpoint the next steps pupils should take to improve their work.

Pupils behave well and their good attendance is a measure of how much they enjoy school. They are well cared for and safeguarded. The curriculum is satisfactory but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but their understanding of, and experiences in learning, about other cultures are limited.

The new senior leadership team has worked hard to build a cohesive staff team which is strongly focused on improvement and whose members understand how they are accountable for raising standards. Shortcomings identified by the headteacher have been tackled vigorously. Governors have contributed satisfactorily to decisions which have added some stability to staffing and ensure that all pupils get the opportunities they need. Whilst increasingly challenging and supporting the school as critical partners, they are aware of the need to take further measures to promote community cohesion more effectively in order to raise pupils' awareness of living in a multicultural society.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics throughout the school by:

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- ensuring that pupils, especially the more able, are suitably challenged
- planning opportunities for pupils to develop writing, and use mathematics skills in different ways, across subjects.
- Increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning by:
 - embedding assessment practices to ensure that pupils always know what they need to do next in order to improve their work
 - ensuring that urgency in the pace of learning is always maintained.
- Plan opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultures and lifestyles of different communities beyond the immediate locality of their school.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy learning and generally work hard in lessons. They are usually attentive and like being practically involved, such as when using computers or working with partners. Role play is given high priority in all classes because it helps pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, and their imaginations. Their enthusiasm is nicely captured in the comment from pupils that, 'The teachers in school are ten out of ten.'

National assessment data shows that standards fell in 2009 and were significantly below the national average. The school has considerably strengthened assessment procedures and is now back on track. Teachers have a better understanding of pupils' learning needs and the skills to assess these accurately. Progress is checked frequently throughout the year. As a result challenging targets are set in all classes, which motivate pupils and improve their rate of progress. In one lesson, for example, pupils were really inspired to learn when challenged to use their understanding of probability to solve problems. They were also given the chance to improve their own learning through discussion with working partners. A scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that most reach expected standards for their age and that given their starting points they achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils have caring attitudes towards one another. They willingly take on additional responsibilities, such as being playground buddies, which help everyone to feel very safe. Relationships are positive in school but pupils have few opportunities to compare their experiences with those of groups from different backgrounds in other schools. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a sensible diet and plenty of exercise, and there is a good take-up of places for after school sports. This is recognised through the Healthy Schools award. The school council is active and makes sure that all pupils have a voice in school affairs. Council members are watchful with regard to health and well-being and their recent written request to parents asking them not to smoke close to the school gates had a rewarding result. Pupils' above average attendance is a positive step towards developing the life-skills they will need for the world of work.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Although there are some good lessons as well as some with outstanding features, there are still inconsistencies in the quality and pace of teaching overall. Lessons are planned well, taking account of pupils' different abilities. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Nevertheless, there are still occasions when teachers should expect more urgency from some pupils in the way they settle down to activities. Teachers make good use of electronic whiteboards and pupils' use of laptops is a positive feature of most lessons. Teaching assistants use their skills and understanding of pupils effectively to make a valuable contribution to their learning and progress. Teachers' use of marking is satisfactory. Although notable improvement has been made, especially in involving pupils in their own assessment, practices are not fully embedded and the help that pupils gain from teachers' marking is too variable between classes and across subjects.

While there is sufficient focus on pupils learning of literacy and numeracy skills, there are too few opportunities for them to use and develop these skills in different ways across subjects. Teachers' expertise is used to good effect in art, music, sports and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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French. A good selection of after-school clubs enriches pupils' learning and adds to their enjoyment of school. Provision for personal and social development ensures that pupils are able to make properly informed choices about their well-being and relationships by the end of Year 6.

The school cares well for all of its pupils. This is overwhelmingly endorsed by parents and carers. Provision for pupils who have additional needs is planned carefully and checked at regular intervals to make sure they achieve as well as they can. High expectations provide pupils with a good benchmark for their personal attitudes and behaviour towards others. There are good systems for informing parents and carers about children's progress and secure arrangement for supporting pupils when they start and leave the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's determined leadership has been a driving force in bringing about improvements. Since her appointment she has established an effective senior leadership team, opened up professional development opportunities for managers at all levels and charged all staff with accountability for improving standards and quality of provision. A positive response from the school to local authority support has helped to add further rigour to self-evaluation and raise expectations. Leaders recognise the need to consolidate and build on the early stages of their success. Recent changes to governors' roles mean that their support and commitment is increasingly channelled towards strategic planning and evaluation of the school's progress. Procedures for safeguarding are good. All who work in the school know their responsibilities and systems are robust. The school ensures that all pupils are given the opportunities they need for their personal achievement. Leaders have assessed the school's cultural and social context and opportunities to work with local communities, but action to promote community cohesion beyond local boundaries is too limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There have been recent improvements in leadership and provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result children's learning and development get off to a sound start. Children enter Nursery with lower than expected skills for their age. They make satisfactory progress and, although still below expectations, at the end of Reception most are working within their early learning goals. There is a good focus on children's personal social and emotional development. Consequently, they get on well with each other and behave well when listening to stories. However, many do not show the initiative or levels of independence expected at other times, such as when tidying up. Letters and sounds are taught daily and these early skills give children in Reception more confidence when tackling writing. Children are keen to be involved in activities and teachers plan a good balance between those which are led by adults and the ones children choose for themselves. Some activities are linked in interesting ways to make them enjoyable. For example, a story, expertly told, about going on a 'bear hunt' was followed up outside in a creative activity when children used their musical instruments to try to frighten the 'bears' out of their hiding places. However, teachers rightly recognise that there is more planning to be done in order to make best use of the outside area. Provision for children's safety and well-being is well managed. Teachers provide a welcoming and stimulating environment for children. They establish good relationships with parents and carers who appreciate the opportunities they have to share in their children's learning. Staff members are very watchful over all children in their care. Currently, they are developing the skills they need to observe and record more effectively the important stages in children's learning and to use their observations to plan the next steps.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response from parents and carers to the questionnaires. Inspectors agree with the overwhelming view that the school takes good care of its pupils and the positive response to questions about teaching and management of the school. Inspection evidence does not support the concerns expressed by a small number of parents that behaviour is not managed well or that pupils with additional needs are not fully supported.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newstead Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 214 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	55	49	38	10	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	57	54	42	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	61	47	62	48	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	38	56	43	18	14	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	59	45	54	42	13	10	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	42	61	47	10	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	38	76	58	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	29	81	62	7	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	35	71	55	9	7	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	35	63	48	16	12	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	32	70	54	12	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	52	40	55	42	11	8	9	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	47	50	38	11	8	4	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure for us to talk to you about your school and to find out how proud you are to be Newstead pupils. I am also happy to tell you that we found you to be polite, well mannered and well behaved and that your attendance at school is above average. All of those things are very important so do keep them up. However, we did find that you need to know more about how people from different backgrounds to your own live and work.

You make satisfactory progress and most of you reach the standards we would expect in your work. Nevertheless, there is still room for some improvement, especially in English and mathematics. We agree with you that your teachers work hard to make your lessons fun and that all of the grown-ups who work in school take good care of you.

Your parents, teachers, school governors and, I am sure, you too, want your school to be better. To help that to happen we have asked your teachers to do three things. The first is to help you to reach higher standards in English and mathematics, for example, by letting you practise writing and using your mathematics skills in different ways. Second, we have asked your teachers to make sure that when they mark your work they always tell you exactly what you need to do next to make it better. Third, that you have more opportunities to find out about different groups of people living in the United Kingdom and other countries throughout the world.

Best wishes and good luck to all of you.

Yours sincerely

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